THE KHAṆḌAVALĀS OF MITHILĀ

By

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Like the Karṇāṭas and the Oinavāras[1] of Mithilā, the origin of the Khaṇḍavalās is shrouded in mystery and no scientific account of this dynasty is yet available though a good deal of traditional account has been written or compiled by the scholars.[2] After the fall of the Oinvāras, Mithilā was passing through a period of political chaos and confusion and there was no stability. During this period of confusion, some Rajput chiefs usurped power here and there and established their sway. The *Aini Tirhut* preserves an account of the ruling dynasty. The contemporary chronicler, Mulla Taqia, does not say anything obout the Khaṇḍavalās except a passing reference on traditional lines to Mahāmahopādhyāya Mahésa Thākura. It is apparent that the Khaṇḍavalās did not immediately succeed the Oinvāras as we see that even before the accession of Akbar, Tappas Saroñjā and Parri belonged to a Hindu Raja Chunchun after whose death, Lakṣmī Siṁha, a Rajput came to that part of the country in 954 A. H. (=1547 - 48 A. D.) and obtained a *sanad* from the then emperor.[3] Even the famous couplet *Az Kose ta Jhose* (from the Kosi to the whole of Tirhut), and *Az Gang ta Sang* (from Ganges to the mountain), ascribed to Mm. Mahesa Ṭhākura and mentioned in the *Purnea Settlement Report,* originated after the conquest of Tirhut by Illtutmish. It seems that after the long lapse of time when

1. See my papers and books:-(i) The Karnātas of Mithilā in the ABORD-XXXV, 91ff
(ii) The Oinwāras of Mithilā in the JBRS—1954;
(iii) History of Bihar ; and
(iv) Mithila Ka Samkshipta Rājnitika Itihās (in Maithili), Cf-Upendra Thakur—History of Mithilā.
2. MTV—, BMI—it deals with the history of Khandavalās of Mithila; S. N. Singh : History of Tirhut-Appendix. Bihari Lal—Aini Tirhut; Aufrecht-Cat-I. 99 which refers to MSS entitled "Mithila-Varnan" by Kedar Sharma; Mitra (R. L.)-Notices-I.2023—which refers to a MSS entitled "Mithilesacarita by Ratnamani; Khandwalākulavinode (Darbhanga-1329), M. D.-P. 72ff ; Ghose's—Indian Chiefs, Rajas and Zamindars"-Pt.II; Kerr-Darbhanga Settlement Report (1896-1903) ; Stevenson-Moore Muzaffarpore Settlement Report (1898-99); Bryne—Purnea Settlement Report. Hunter—Statistical Account-Tirhut and Champaran—pp. 208-14; R. K. Choudhary—History of Bihar; Inscriptions of Bihar; History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut.
3. BPP—XLIII-No. 85 (1932)-P.117.

Mm. Maheśa Ṭhākura acquired the territory of Mithilā, the old adage was attributed to him and since then the concept has been very popular.[4] A scientific history of the dynasty can be prepared only when the archives of the Raj family are thrown open to the historians.[5] Stray reference are available to us here and there and various lists, *praśastis* and other accounts published by the Raj Press throw some scattered light on the history of the family.[6] Vincent Smith[7] informs us that in the Mackenzie collection of the India Office Library there is a "Sanskrit history of a part of Akbar's reign, written in prose and verse, by Maheśa Ṭhākura." It has to be borne in mind here that the old territorial divisions of Mithila (Champaran, Muzaffarpore, Darbhanga, Shaharsa, Purnea and the parts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur) were now gone and in these areas there were now separate administrative units. Since the days of Haji Illyas, Champaran and Tirhut came to be separetely mentioned and during the Mughal period Purnea was made a seperate Sarkar. Bettia, Narhan, Banaili were separate estates beides small Zemindaries spread all over North Bihar.[8] Long after the assumption of power by Akbar, the Karrānis and the Afgans held sway over a major portion of Tirhut and the Mughal rulers had to face a sea of troubles in the beginning. Under the Mughals, Tirhut or North Bihar (as popularly known) consisted of the following divisions:[9]

(i)	Sarkar Champaran	— 3 Mahals
(ii)	Sarkar Hajipur	— 11 Mahals
(iii)	Sarkar Tirhut	— 74 Mahals
(iv)	Sarkar Purnea	— 9 Mahals

4. Cf. My—History of Muslim Rule.

5. It is regrettable that Bihar Through the Ages (BTA-edited by R. R. Diwakar) does not contain an account of this important dynasty of Mithilā in the Middle ages.

6. I have seen more than a dozen of such pamphlets, genealogical tables and prasastis written on different occasions but unless they stand the scrutiny of historical test, it is impossible to rely on those evidences. P. Jha (MTV-Uttarārdha—P. 8) says that there was a copper plate. BMI contains some facts and the book is based more on fanciful imagination than solid facts.

7. V. A. Smith—Akbar, the Great Moghul—P. 486; Cf. Eggelling-Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS-VII-No. 4106. The MSS in photostat copy is said to be in the Raj Library but I have not been able to verify it.

8. Dr. Irfan Habib has given a short account of the Zemindaris under the Moguls in a paper published in the PIHC-Trivendrum—1958; also Cf. Irfan Habib-"Agrarian System under the Mughals".

9. ED. VII. 138; JASB (1873) P. 254; AA-11; Bihar during the time of Auranzeb had 252 Mahals.

Darbhanga was a Mahal of Sarkar Tirhut. The Khaṇḍavalās seem to have enjoyed the status of powerful Zemindar under the Moghuls. The Moghul officials were posted at Darbhanga. The status, enjoyed by the Karṇāṭas and the Oinvāras, was not the privilege of the Khaṇḍavalās.[10]

Very little is known about the origin of the Khaṇḍavalās and the history of the Darbhanga Raj. Recent researches have brought to light some important documents of the Raj family,[11] but they are also silent about the origin of the Khaṇḍawalās. The original *farman* in the name of Maheśa Ṭhākura is not yet available though it is said that its contents are noted in document of 1655-56.[12] The earliest *farman* is that of Akbar granted to Gopāla Thākura, who was entrusted with the *Qanungoship* and *Choudharyship* of the entire Sarkar Tirhut. He was authorised to realise at the rate of 1/4 *taṅkā* per *bighā* (as *rasum* of Qanungoship) and I *taṅkā* per bigha (as *rasum* for Choudharyship) for the management of affairs and for his private subsistence. He is to be considered "absolute".[13] In my earlier study,[14] I had suggested that in offering this Zemindari to Maheśa Ṭhākura (or his descendents ?) Akbar had some motives. The Afgans were disturbing the whole area of North Bihar (from Purnea to Hajipur) and hence it was necessary to have a man of the soil for the collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order. Even the local rulers, here and there, were restive, and therefore, the area, originally granted to Raghunandana as the tradition goes, was confirmed in favour of the Khaṇḍavalās, who had acquired name at Mandlā and later at Delhi. According to the grant, referred to above, the Khaṇḍavalā rulers (Maheśa Ṭhākura or Gopāla Ṭhākura) was a State functionary charged with responsibility of maintaining law and order and the collection of revenue. From a perusal of records, it appears that no land grant was possibly attached.

A newly discovered *MSS*[15] entitled "*Gaḍheśa-Nṛpa-Varṇan-Saṁgraha-ślokāh*", contains some information about the Maithila scholars including Maheśa Ṭhākura. This *MSS* may be considered as a supplement to the *MSS*, entitled *Gaḍheśa-Nṛpa-Varṇanaṁ*[16] of Rūpanātha, a Maithila,

10. My forthcoming book—"History of Muslim Rule in Tirnut".
11. Cf. J. S. Jha—A peep into the Darbhanga Raj Archives - in the India Archives-XII 45ff; Q. Ahmed-"Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj" (1574-1666).
12. J. S. Jha - op. cit. F. N. I.
13. Op. cit : 45-46-Important officials were present there.
14. HMT. .
15. ABORI-XXVIII-pp. 247-80 (Edited by G. V. Bhave).
16. Published by G. H. Bhave in the Journal of the Nagpur University--1940.

and compiled in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The first *MSS* contains verses in praise of the rulers of Gaḍha Maṇḍalā dynasty. The *MSS* contains the collection of thirteen poets of which one is Ṭhakkura. Ṭhakkura is identified with Maheśa Ṭhākura. Rūpanātha, the compiler of another work, regards Ṭhakkura (Maheśa Thākura) as a descendent of the Ṭhakkuras of Bhaur (Darbhanga District-Bihar), and a religious preceptor of Yado Rai. He was a contemporary of Dalpati Shah and Rānī Durgawati, and both of them listened to the religious discourse of Maheśa Ṭhākura with rapt attention jointly and sometimes separately. Maheśa Ṭhākura, a great scholar and versatile genious, used to recite the *Purāṅas.* It appears from the contemporary local records that once Maheśa Ṭhākura, due to certain unavoidable reasons, failed to attend to his duties personally and sent his trusted disciple, Raghunandan, as his substitute. Inspite of his efficiency, the offensive remarks of Durgawati compelled him to leave the State and he went to Bastar, where he secured a liberal grant. He presented one of such grants to Durgawati and proceeded on to Delhi alongwith Maheśa Ṭhākura. At Delhi, he obtained from Akbar a free gift of the territory of Tirhut (Darbhanga) and got it registered in the name of his *Guru*, Maheśa Ṭhākura. When Maheśa Ṭhākura and Raghunandan proceeded to Darbhanga, Maheśa's youngest brother, Dāmodara Ṭhakkura, continued to be the royal preceptor of the Goṇḍa rulers but when he refused to officiate at the installation ceremony of Madhukarashāh (since Madhukara was noted for cruelty), Dāmodara was deprived of his *Jāgir* and he went back to Darbhanga. The known immediate predecessors of Maheśa Ṭhākura are Jñānapati Ṭhākura, Puruṣottama Ṭhākura, Padmanābha Ṭhākura and the known descendants of Dāmodara are chronologically Kamaladatta Ṭhākura, Ruchipati Ṭhākura, Indrapati Ṭhākura and Premanidhi Ṭhākura.[17] The villages of Mahespura and Tirhutiyātola are remiscient of the dominance of the Maithilas in the vicinity of Maṇḍalā even today. The tradition

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The following verses are ascribed to Mahesha Thākura—

चूड़ामणिर्जन्मदमेधकृत्ये, स्वाचार्यआसीद भूथेथतस्मै ।।
तदंगतांय: पविर्यिनृपोदात्, काशीमगाद्यो नृपवन्नृपांते ।।
साधूनार्माभिलाषसिद्धिविभव: क्षात्रंसमग्रंमह: ।।
शक्तिर्मुक्तिमतीस्मरस्यभवन: कीर्ति: कुलस्योन्नति: ।।
सवस्वँसुकृतस्यकौशलमितिस्रष्टुर्गुणानां निधि ।।
दोषानामपथंसुतोऽस्यनृपते: श्री प्रेमनारायण: ।।

17. ABORI-XXVIII-250; Cf. Briggs-Feristha—II. 217-18.

about Raghunandana is yet preserved.[18] Few verses of Ghanasyāma Miśra, said to be a relation of the descendants of Premanidhi Ṭhākura, is also preserved in the collection referred to above. The local tradition in Mithilā confirms this view.[19] His predecessors had proceeded to Khaṇḍvā earlier and has secured grants for their literary merits and other activities and that is why they called themselves Khaṇḍavalās. Maheśa Ṭhākura is said to have composed verses in praise of Māna Siṁha (who was instrumental in getting the grant transferred in the name of Maheśa Ṭhākura) and Akbar.[20] It is generally believed that Maheśa Thākura received the grant in the 1556 A. D.[21] As stated earlier, Maheśa Ṭhakura had to face a lot of troubles in settling down in Mithilā, which was then divided into a number of smaller units.[22] Bhaura was an important administrative centre and Keśava Kāyastha was the '*Adhipati*' of that area. A *MSS*, in my possession, containing the list of the rulers of Tirhut calls Keśava a *Dīwān* (Prime Minister) and a *Majamalamadar* combined. During the period (1526-1556), the Bhar Rajputs were also ruling in different parts of Tirhut. Bābar mentions one Rūpanārāyaṇa of Tirhut.[23] Rupanārāyaṇa was a tributary of Bābar. When Maheśa Ṭhākura came, he had to face a stiff opposition.[24] He succeeded in stabilising his position in Mithilā and laid the foundation of a strong administration after suppressing the local chiefs and chieftains.

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18. Quoted-Ibid—P. 251.
19. Hunter-Statistical Account (1877)- Tirhut and Champaran—pp. 208-14;Aini-Tirhut-MD.—MTV.-Uttarārdha.
20. ST-213.
21. नवग्रह वेद वसुन्धरा, शक मै अकबर शाह; पण्डित सुवुध महेश को किन्हों मिथिलानाह ।।
The traditional Slokas are—आसीत पण्डित मण्डलाग्र गणिता भूमण्डला खण्डला ।
जाता खण्डवलाकुलेगिरिसुता भक्तो महेशः कृति । शाकेरन्ध्र तुरङ्ग श्रुतिमही—१४४८
(Sic) लक्षिते हविनेवाग्देवी कृपया सुयेन मिथिलादेशः समस्तोर्ऽजितः—
22. Ain-i-Tirhut, MTV-Part II-P. i. MD-72; Mithilānka (Maithili Section)—P. 33.
23. Tuzuk-i-Bābari—pp 50-51.
24. Cf—

रहै भौर क्षत्री प्रबल, वसत भौर निज ठौर ।
सूर समर विजयी बड़े, सब क्षत्री सिरमौर ।।
अच्युत, मेघ, गोपाल मिलि, मारौ क्षत्री राज ।
निज सुत लै भागी तबै रानी नैहर राज ।।
बहुत दिवस के बाद सौं, सजि आये पम्मार ।
युद्ध करन मिथिलेश सौं, सेना अपरम्पार ।।

—See my forth coming paper on the "Gandhavariyā Rājputas of Mithilā"—

Tirhut was, then, the important centre of the Karrānnis and the Afgans. In their fight with the Kakkars, the Karranis succeeded and defeated them in the Gaṇḍaka region and wrested some territory.[25] Taj Khan Karrāni attained supreme status and the discontinued Afghan chiefs rallied round him. Sulaiman was the unquestioned leader of the Karrānis (1565-72).[26] He was succeeded by Daud and during his reign, the Mughals extended their authority in Bihar with success. Rebellions and revolts were regular feature in North Bihar and the problem of State administration in that area was the first pre-requisite of any State Government. It was Hussain Quli Khan who was entrusted by Akbar to tackle the problem. The Bihar army was reorganised under Khan Jahan. Rājā Gopāla[27] was one of the assistants of Khan Jahan and I am inclined to believe that Gopāla was the Khaṇḍavalā ruler of Tirhut. It was possibly in recognition of his services to the Mughal army, in suppressing the revolt and in bringing about stabilisation in the area of Tirhut, that Akbar made a fresh grant. Gopal got the fresh grant with certain specification of his rights and duties and that is an indication of his loyalty to Akbar. After his conquest of Bihar, Akbar made it a *Suba*[28] (or Province). Tirhut was an important *Sarkar* (one of the biggest Sarkars) with seventy two Mahals under it and officers like *Fauzdars*, *Amils*, and *Jagirdars* were appointed. Darbhanga, during the Mughal period, was a *Mahal* under Sarkar Tirhut.[29] The decentralisating forces were still at work in North Bihar and the Emperor was compelled to send Mulla Tayab, Rai Purushottam[30] and Shamshir Khan to be respectively *Diwan* and *Bakshi* and incharge of the *Khalsa* revenue of the Province of Bihar.

A very interesting detail about the history of the Khaṇḍavalās is available to us from the *Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records* (P. C. R. C., p. 81-No. 104-May 1788-June 1789). A letter dated Nov. 9, 1789 from Tirhut to Sir John Shore, President and a member of the Board of Revenue, mentions about the refutation of the claim of the *Dustorrānt* collection of which he was collecting of late years. But history shows that he had no hereditory claim over such collection. By dint of his ability and aptitude, he (Maheśa Ṭhākura) attracted the notice of emperor Akbar......

25. BPP LXXII. 19ff.
26. Badaoni-II.166; Makhazan-123.
27. Beveridge—Akbarnama-III, 252.
28. The name Suba originated fron the time of Akbar. It was an aggregate of Sarkars, Sarkars of Dasturs, Dastur of Pargannas or Mahals. Pargana or mahal meant a fiscal division-Cf. Riyaz, p. 7
29. For details-Cf. S. H. Askari's article in the BPP.—XLV-P.7 ff.
30. ED. V., 409; Beveridge—op. cit. III,418.

the privilege of collecting *Suddooee* was confirmed during the Subadari of Nawab Mahabat Jang in 1135 Fasli...Rago Sing (Rāghava Siṁha) by his large presents to the Nawab, Mahabatjang, and his amla, acquired the *mokarari* lease of Tirhut at one lac rupee and a full confirmation of his title of Rājā. He also paid annually a *nazrānā* of 50,000/- rupees to Dewan Dharnidhar, by which he secured the quiet possession of Sircar. Eknaut Thākur (Eknāth), father of Mādhava Siṁha, having fallen out with his principal Rāghava Siṁha, went to Mahabat Jang and gave him information of all the Rājā's profit. It aroused the cupidity of the Nawab, who, atonce, marched towards Tirhut and seized all the property belonging to Rāghava Siṁha amounting to ten or twelve lacs. Though the Rājā fled, but his family was captured and brought to Patna. Ultimately there was compromise and the Rājā was ordered to collect the revenue of Tirhut for the Nawab, receiving himself only to sundry *Nankar* villages and *Suddooee*. Rāghava Siṁha evinced keen interest and the country prospered. After his death, his family succeeded. Mādhava Siṁha multiplied distress and desolated the country.

Maheśa Ṭhākura was succeeded by Gopāla (his second son, first son having already predeceased his father). He is credited with having subdued the rebellions Rajput chiefs. It was possibly during his reign that the revenue settlement of Todarmal was introduced. The document, now made available, of the reign of Gopāla Ṭhākura is an authenticated copy, suggests that Gopāla Ṭhākura was to look after the interests of the *Dīwani* and he was authorised to realise the aforesaid sum for his own maintenance. He was the official Choudhari and Qanungo and the ryots were directed to regard him as such. My contention is that in recognition of Gopal's services to the Mughal army, Akbar reaffirmed the grant. Khan-Jahan, under whom he had fought, is one of the persons who endorsed the document. Another important point, brought in this grant, is that a representation had to be made to the emperor. The local opposition was, no doubt, there but Singh and Ahmed (*op. cit.*) have confused the issue. Tirhut was then the centre of all sorts of rebels and aspirants and Mughal authority was not firmly established. The possibility is that in view of the then disturbed condition, the local authorities refused to acknowledge the authority (as assigned) of the Khaṇḍavalās and that is why Akbar explicitly stated in the *Farmana* that "*they should not consider anyone as sharing these powers with him*"—This might also indicate that some of his own kinsmen might have been aspirants for the same. Gopāla Ṭhākura had been making all efforts to support the empire and his services were recognised with royal confirmation. Mulla Taqia preserves a

list of the officials of the Mughal empire in Tirhut. When Bahadur Badakshi of Tirhut rebelled and assumed independence, it is said that Todarmal induced the Zemindars to reduce their supplies with a view to dispersing the rebels. The exact territorial limit of Gopal's authority is not clear. The Mughal conquest of Tirhut opened a new era of peace and progress. *Sadar Choudhary* was the highest financial officer in Tirhut, of which Darbhanga was the head quarter. Maheśa Ṭhākura was the highest financial officer and the position was held by his successors. Under *Sadar Choudhary* were (a) *Choudhary*; and (b) *Qanungo* and under *Choudhary* there was a *Muqaddam* or the *village head*. There were seven hundreds *Savāras* and eighty thousand paid troops (*Maashir*-Patna-1946). The *AT* says that Mir Dayanata Ali was the Fauzadar of Darbhanga and Bansrai Choudhary, Makhdum Shah, Sultan Hussain and Khantam Choudhary were the important officials and contemporaries of Akbar (P. 14). Gopāla Ṭhākura was followed by his brother Parmānanda Ṭhākura who died issueless, and he was followed by his brother (youngest) Śubhaṅkarā Ṭhākura. He is credited with having founded Subhankarpur near Darbhanga and is believed, in traditional sources, to have been very brave.

Śubhaṅkara Ṭhākura was followed by Purushottam Ṭhākura (1617-1641). During the time of Jahangir, Darbhanga and Hajipur were assigned to Abdulla Khan as Jagir. Jahangir also granted some land to a Maulvi to preach Islam at Darbhanga. Purushottam Ṭhākura was invited by the imperial revenue collector, who came round to collect tribute, at Quilaghat in Darbhanga and then treacherously murdered.[31] The culprit is said to have been punished by the emperor. He is believed to have been succeeded by Nārāyṇa Ṭhākura and the latter by Sundara Ṭhākura (1641-1668). For purely administrative reasons, Tirhut used to be mentioned separately from Bihar, Champaran and Hajipur[32] for sometime. From the time of Jahangir and Shahjehan, Tirhut formed a part of the administration of Bihar.[33] During the time of Shahjehan, Tirhut acquired prominence. Etasama, Mirza Abdul Rasul Khan, Newab Sajawar Khan, Mirza Abdul Mali and Mirza Khan Marhum were the *fauzdars* of Darbhanga. It is believed that during the reign of Sundar Ṭhākura, Tirhut was resurveyed and a fresh revenue roll was prepared.[34] Jha and Ahmed have brought to light the *Mazharnāmā* of Sundara Ṭhākura

31. ST—217.
32. Cf. J. N. Sarkar-India of Aurangjeb.
33. ED. VII. 137-8.
34. MTV-Part II, 29-30; MD-78.

(*op. cit.*), which indicates that there was a division of property prior to the accession of Sundara Ṭhākura. The document was written in 1062 A. H. (= 1652 A. D.). How can there be a division without some landed property ?. From this grant, it is evident that some land was given as grants either to Maheśa Ṭhākura or Gopāla Ṭhākura. The *Mazharnāmā* contains names of various persons of the dynasty. Its exact nature is not clear. In one of the indigenous documents of Tirhut, we have the name of Nawab Hakikat Ali of Darbhanga or Tirhut and emperor Shahjehan.[35] The document is dated L.S. 507 (= 1628-29 A.D.) and refers to the sale of a *dasa* or slave. Two learned Brāhmaṇas from Tirhut were presented before Shahjehan, who being pleased with their extraordinary learning, granted them each a robe of honour and a cash reward of one thousand rupees.[36] Another Maithila author, Raghudeva Miśra, is said to have composed a *Virudāvalī* in praise of Shahjehan. It is said that Raghudeva presented himself at the court of Shahjehan to prefer his claims to the *Rāj* of Tirhut as an inheritance from his maternal grandfather, Achutya Ṭhākura, to become the Rājā of Tirhut.[37] That there was some difference amongst the members of the family is evident from the *Mazharnāmā*, quoted above.

Sundara Ṭhākura was suceeded by his son Mahinātha Ṭhākura. He was a powerful ruler and he had some difficulties with the contemporary ruler of Bettia, named Gajasimha. who had obtained the title of Rājā from Shahejehan. Mahinātha Ṭhākura was a contemporary of Aurangzeb. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Mirza Khan, Fedai Khan, and Shekh Mohammad Jiwan were the fauzdars of Darbhanga. Morang (the Terai area now under Nepal) was cousing serious trouble to the authority of the Mughals in North Bihar and Bengal. Both Shahejehan and Aurangzeb paid serious attention to the problem and they rightly pressed into service the fauzdars of Darbhanga and the rulers of the Khaṇḍavalā dynasty. It was in 1664 A. D. that the Mughal troops led by Mirza Khan, fauzdar of Darbhanga, entered Morang, a hill country west of Coch Bihar and north of Purnea, Saharsa, and Darbhhnga districts. Forces from Gorakhpur under its Fauzdar Illahavardi Khan, were

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35. Mithilānka (Maithili Section)—P. 12—ल० सं० ५०९ श्रावण वदि १४ रवौ पुन: परम भट्टारकाश्वपति गजपति नराति राज्यत्रयाधिपति सुरत्राणशासत् **साहजहाँ** सम्मानित नओात्र हकीकत खाण सम्भुज्यमान तीरभुक्त्यन्तरित तीसाठतया संलग्न झोरिया ग्रामे.................

36. PIHC—1944 (Madras), pp. 350-51,

37. Journal of the Bihar University- I,79-80.

also pressed into service. Mirza Khan died there and then others were deputed. Services of Fedai Khan, Ibrahim Khan, and Saista Khan were also utilised for the purpose. Morang king had shown signs of rebellion and Mahīnātha Ṭhākura deputed his younger brother Narpati Ṭhākura to help Aurangjeb's army in suppressing the rebillious chief.[38] For the timely help, Mahīnātha Ṭhākura won the favour of Aurangzeb, Morang chiefs were chastised and the elephants were captured. Aurangzeb was pleased to issue a farman[39] in favour of Rājā Mahīnātha Ṭhākura, the extracts of which are—"............since the news of the sincerity and good service of Mahīnātha Ṭhākura...........who is obedient to Islam and subservient to officers, in the conquest of the country of Palamu...... and in the suppression of the Zemindars of Morang alongwith the late Nawab Mirza Khan,.........therefore by way of grace and in order to honour (the grantee) the Sadar Zemindari and the settlement of Sarkar Tirhut alongwith the services (?) of *zemindari*, *Milkiat*, *Choudhari* and *Moqaddami* of Parganas of Dharmapur, Sarkar Farrakhabad, alias Monghyr.........and the *Zemindari* of Parganna Haveli, Purnea and Tajpur, pertaining to Bengal.........together with a *Khilat* and Mahi Maratib are granted in heredity......to the said, Mahīnātha." The following duties are specified :

(i) Collection of revenue.

(ii) Supervission of financial and administrative affairs.

(iii) Suppression of rebels.

(iv) Depute amins in each Pargana, get the cultivated and fallow lands measured, contact the ryots, extend *Tacavi* loan, and strive for the increase of revenue; correct all the papers and make them up-to-date.

(v) Should collect *Nankars* and *Dasturs* in acordance with the established regulations.

It is evident that he was made the hereditary Zemindar of the parganas by 1665 A. D. as noted below:

Bihar :	Sarkar Tirhut including the valley of the mountain-102 parganas
	Pargana Dharampur (Sarkar Monghyr) I pargana
Bengal :	Sarkar Purnea —5 Parganas
	Sarkar Tajpur —2 Parganas.

38. Mithilānka (Maithili Section) P. 37, Cf. JASB (1873)-P. 241; J. N. Sarkar. Aurangzeb III, 41 : ST. 217-18; for details my-HMT.

39. Jha—op. cit., Ahmad—o. p. cit.

Aurangzeb further directed the Governor of Bihar, Lashkar Khan, to honour Mahīnātha Ṭhākura who along with his brother Narpati Ṭhākura had helped the Mughal forces in suppressing the Morang rebels. The Governor was directed to honour this Hindu Brāhmaṇa so that he may feel honoured in the eyes of his neighbours.

The accounts, set forth above, are further vindicated by the traditional sources. Mr. Bakshi, the outher of the voluminous history of the Khaṇḍvalās, informs us that on the recommendation of Mirza Khan, the emperor was pleased enough to honour Mahīnātha Ṭhākura.[40] He further tells us that Aurangzeb honoured with *Khilat* and *Zemindari* He refers to the acquisition of *Zemindari* in Bengal, which was refused by Mahīnātha Ṭhākura on religious ground. This remains to be verified. This grant of Aurangzeb is important for a study of the history of land revenue system. The duties of Qanungo are also specified therein. The aforesaid grant further states that the Rājā of Tirhut was helpful to the Mughals in conquering Palamu. It was under Mahīnātha Ṭhākura that the Khaṇḍavalās reached the height of their glory.

He was succeeded by Narpati Ṭhākura (also mentioned in the aforesaid grant). He distinguished himself as one of the greatest supporters of the Mughal authority in Bihar and thereby secured the stability of the house of Khaṇḍavalās in Tirhut. There were various chiefs and officials, no doubt, but through the constant efforts of Mahinātha and Narpati, the Khaṇḍavalās came to occupy a pre-eminent position in Mithilā and with the acquisition of the grant from Aurangzeb, they came to be regarded as the real rulers, certainly subject to the authority of the Mughals. Narpati Ṭhākura was suceeded by his son Rāghava Siṁha, whose exploits in the history of Mithilā have inspired a number of poets. He adopted the surname of "Siṁha". He was involved in a battle with the Rājā of Bettia, named Dhrubasiṁha.[41] He is called "*Mithilāpati*";

40. BMI—153-54; MTV-II; MD.

41. Cf— नगहु खड्ग ध्रुवसिह तोहि ऊपर यम चढ़ौ ।
मिथिलापति सौवेर दिन - दिन तोहि बढ़ौ ॥
तेकयत कुलवधिक एतो राघव नृप राजा ।
अरि दल दलन सम्मथ भीम भारत जिमि गाजा ॥
कवि कहत राम रे मूढ़ सुनु जेहि दिल प्रचण्ड भेंरो रहत ।
ठहरे न फौंज जाथ इति को जब सरदार खाँ तेगा गहत ॥

Cf. R. K. Choudhary-Mithilā Ka Rājnitika Itihās (in Maithili); and History of Bihar; iii, Select Inscriptions of Bihar.

"*Nṛipa*"; "*Rājā*" etc, in contemporary *Prasast's* and poems. The famous Afghan chief, Sardar Khan, was in the service of Rāghavasiṁha (1700-1739 A. D.). Bihari Lal informs us that he was honoured with the title of *Rājā* by Aurangzeb.[42] Local traditions affirm that during his reign Nawab Zainuddin Ahmad Khan came to Tirhut and stayed at village Bhaura, the capital of the Darbhanga Rāja.[43] He is said to have secured the *Paṭṭā Mukkarari* of Sarkar Tirhut on payment of rupees one lac per year. From the document, granted to Mahīnātha Ṭhākura, it appears that the number of Mahals in Tirhut was increased from 74 to 102 during the time of Aurangzeb and the supervision of the entire area was entrusted to the house of Khaṇḍavalās.[44] We learn from *Chahar-Gulsan* that the revenue of Sarkar Tirhut was further raised in 1720 after revision of the existing rates. After the death of Aurangzeb, the central authority was weakened and the decentralising forces were discernible. Allivardi became the Deputy Governor of Bihar in 1733. The activities of the *Banjar. s* disturbed the area of Tirhut. Tirhut was infested with the *Banjaras*, who, in the guise of traders and travellers, laid the country under contribution and plundered the area. With the help of Afghans of Darbhanga (some of whom were in the service of Rāghavasiṁha), Allivardi succeeded in sending an expedition against the *Banjaras.* They were disgorged and driven out and that emboldened Allivardi to take effective steps against the refractory Hindu chief.[45] In North Bihar, he had to deal with Rājā Dhruba Siṁha of Bettia and Rājā Rāghava Siṁha of Bhaura (Bhanwara of Gladwin—a *Mahal* in Sarkar Tirhut). The *Muzzaffarnāmā*[46] says "the Rājā of Bhaura, proud of his hills and jungles and strong places, used to refuse obedience to the orders of the Governor. This year, too he (certainly Rāghava Siṁha) began to assert his independence. Allivardi Khan marchd against him", making his saddle his sleeping place. The Rājā, too, prepared, for fight. A severe encounter took place, the like of which had not been seen before. At last the Rājā took to flight. Abdul Karim was appointed to persue him. He made forced marches, siezed the wife and children of the Rājā on the skirt of Dhaulagiri hill (?) and sent them to the Governor. The victors returned to Patna Fort. the Rājā made his submission, the district was brought under the administration and he returned to his home". He was properly

42. AT-33—According to some by Allivardi.
43. Ibid-32.
44. ST-95
45. R. K. Choudhary—G. D. College Bulletin Series No. 3.
46. BPP-LXVI- No. 129 (1946 47) P. 68ff.

confirmed as Rājā. From the above account, it appears that Rāghavasiṁha attempted at independence but was subdued. Rāghavasiṁha was one of the most powerful kings of the Khaṇḍavalā dynasty. He defeated Bhupasiṁha of Pargana Panchamahala in Nepal. His authority extended upto Pargana Dharmpur (Purnea), where one of his revenue collectors, Biru Kurmi, usurped power and declared himself as Birshah[47]. He was subdued. Rāghava Siṁha enjoyed the privilege of being a revenue collector, the rate being raised from 1¼% to 2%. He was required to do justice and to relieve peasantry of distress. He was equally answerable to the Nawab for the revenue, collected through his dependents under his superintendence. Family trouble also disturbed Rāghava Siṁha, who also used to pay regularly the annual *nazrānā* to Rājā Dharaṇīdhara, the Nawab's Dewan.[48] His Nephew, Eknātha Ṭhākura, complained of the enormous profit earned by the Rājā and that led Allivardi to sieze his property for sometime. In fine, it can be said that Rāghava Simha further strengthened the house of Darbhanga and there was all round progress. He died in 1739 and was succeeded by Rājā Viṣṇu Simha (1739-43) and on his death, Narendra Siṁha ascended the throne.

The reign of Narendra Siṁha forms yet another landmark in the history of Mithilā. He went on a piligrimage to Jagannātha and on his return, he met the Nawab at Murshidabada. There he was honoured with the title of "Rājā", on condition that he should help the Nawab in times of war. The autonomy of Mithilā was preserved and Narendra Siṁha is credited with having reorganised the administration of Mithilā.[49] Zainuddin had secured the help of Rāghava Siṁha against the Afgans and it was for this purpose that the former had gone to Bhauwara. Narendra Simha, during Rāghava Siṁha's life time, had helped Zainuddin against the Afgans and the credit of Nawab's victory over the Afgans elicited a poet's appreciation.[50] It appears that Zainuddin, in his campaign against Mustafa Khan (Babarganj), secured the help of Narendra Siṁha

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47. Bireb Kurmi was formerly a Khānsāmā—Lal Kavi says –
"वीर नगर वीरसाह का वसै कौसिकी तीर, का पति राखै कौसिका का राखै रघुवीर !"
48. ST-218.
49. BMI – PP. 166-177.
50. Ibid, 184-85; Cf. S. T. P. 221 –
ऐसे महा जोर घोर गंग सुलतानी, बीच झुमत बबर जंग सङ्गर करीन्द्र है ।
औलिया नवाव नामदार पूछै वारबार, वार ये दोऊ कौन अरि वानर परीन्द्र हैं ।
साहेव सुजान जयनुद्दिन अहमद खान, सामने ह्वै अर्ज करैं कहै कवि चन्द्र है ।
ये तो द्रोणवार केशोशाह के अजीतशाह, आगो राघवसिंहजी के नवल नरेन्द्र हैं ।

of Darbhanga and the Droṇavāra ruler of Narhan. It is said that Tirhut was subjected to reassessment. In his earlier attempts to suppress the rebellious Hindu Chiefs, Allivardi was aided by the Afgans. Allivardi carried off a large booty and subjected the area to reassessment[51]. The most important event of his reign was the battle of Kandarpighāt, an account of which has been faithfully preserved by Lal Kavi. This ballad of Lal Kavi is an important source for the study of this event and can not be rejected outright in the present state of our knowledge.

What ultimately was the cause of this battle, we can not exactly say. A former ruler, who had stood in good stead in Allivardi's days of distress, ultimately became his enemy and came to fight is certainly an eniqma. In the present state of our knowledge, no obvious reasons can be adduced either in favour or against. Narendra Siṁha is credited with having brought under control various petty Zemindars of the territory.[52] Some of his own men complained against him to Rājā Rāma Nārāyana to the effect that he (Narendra) was behaving like an independent ruler and was trying to throw off the shackles of the imperial authority. Are we believe that a simple complaint from the erstwhile parteners was the cause of the sanguinary battle of Kandarpīghāta ? It seems plausible to accept the theory that the cause of this war was the intentional delay in paying off the imperial dues and other allied taxes.[53] Bakshi tells us that one Pṛthvī Jhā complained to Rājā Rāma Nārāyana and requested him to go to Delhi and see that the emperor (Ahmed Shah) brings the unruly, Narendra Simha, to book.[54] Another account tells that the army reached Bhanwara for the collection of tribute and there they came to learn that the king was bent upon settling the issues by the force of arm.[55] We learn from the *Riyaz* (P. 296) that the tract of Bhanwara had never previously been trod by the feet of the armies of former *Nāzims*. It appears that Allivardi was the first man to trod this tract. Lal Kavi has given the following description of this battle. The battle was fought on the bank of river Balan between Narendra Simha and the five thousand forces sent by Rājā Rāma Nārāyana headed by Bhikhari Mahta and Salabat Rai.[56] Bhikhari Mahta was the leader of this cam-

51. Riyaz-P. 296; Cf. Siyar-II.
52. MTV-II, 54-55; MD-82-83; BMI-185 ff.
53. BMI - 197-98.
54. Ibid - 213.
55. MD. 83.
56. रामनारायण भूपते कहो मुखालिप जाय । हाकिम को मिथिलेश ने दिन्हों अदल उठाय ।।
सीर करो तिरहुत को ताको रचो उपाय । फौजदार महथा भये संग सलावत राय ।।

paign against Narendra Simha.[57] Bakshi says that Rāma Nārāyana took such a drastic step against Narendra Simha as he was not aware of the earlier farmans granted to the Rājā of Tirhut.[58] The aim of Rāma Nārāyana was to take *Khas* possession of Tirhut from Rājā Narendra Simha. Narendra Simha came out victorious.

In connection with the description of this battle (*MD.* 84-93), Lal Kavi has supplied us with the names of the following important personalities—Zainuddin Ahmed Khan, Rāma Nārāyana, Bhikhari Mahta, Salabat Roy (possibly Salabat Jang, nephew of Allivardi), Bakht Singh,[59] an ally of Allivardi and Namdar Khan. All these persons were on the side of Allivardi. Those, supporting Narendra Simha, included Mitrajit (of Tekari ?), Umrao, Halaray, Dronwar kings, Kosho Shah, and Ajit Shah of Narhan, Ghaziram, Sher Khan and Jafar Khan. There is little doubt that all of them were contemporaries. The fact that Zainuddin was himself leading the battle indicates that it must have taken place before his death in 1748 A. D. The question arises—how could Rāma Nārāyana be called a Rājā then ? Rāma Nārāyana became the Deputy Governor of Bihar in 1752. Prior to this appointment, he was the private Secretary of Zainuddin.[60] He fought for Zainuddin against Mustafa Khan in 1745 and was raised to the post of Diwan in the time of Janaki

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वख्तसिह कुल उद्दरन रोऽमल्ल दिलपुर । चौभान भानु भानू सुकुल एक एक तंसूर ॥
याहि सभ तैनात करी फौजे पाँच हजार । दिगशूल सन्मुख योगिनी महथा उतरे पार ॥
सभै पेट बान्हयो कम्मर जड़ावा । पूछै राह में दूर केतै भवाड़ा ॥
खवरदार ने खबर करी नृप से कहउ बुझाय । पाँच हजार सवार लय महथा पहुँचे आय ॥
किल्लाहूं ते कूँच करि, कर मे गहो कमान । महाराज डेरा दियौ हरिना के मैदान ॥
रामपट्टी ते कूचकरि, पड़ौ अचानक जाय । तब डंका भूपति सुन्यौ ताजिम पहुँचे आय ॥
जाफर खाँ के दूज हालाराय, डंका दए, वक्सी चलए, चढ़े खेत पर जाय ॥
महथा पेंच खेला कए, काहु देखायो बाट । चढ़ी सवारी पार ह्वै गंग दुआर के घाट ॥
सबै फिरि मैदान छाड़ि फौजदार भागि गौ । भयो फतह भूप का सुकत वात्व बाजि गौ ॥
लूटि लूटि लायो सवति लिधुर लपेटे अंग । लाल सुकवि यहि भाँति भौ,समर भिखारी भंग ॥
– Cf.-MD-PP. 83-94

57. B. M. I.188.
58. Ibid – PP. 214-15.
Cf. Gopala Jha – Khandawala Kulabinode; M. Jha Bakshi – "Khandavalā Prasasti Mithilānka (Hindi Section) P. 177.
59. G' D. College Bulletin-Series No. 3; Cf. R. K. Choudhary-Mithilāka Itihas (in Maithili).
60, Siyar-II, 593.

Ram.[61] He was entrusted with the supervision of the powerful Zemindars of Bihar and it, thus, appears plausible to suggest that complaints against the ruler was first of all made to him. He was a trusted ally. Bhikhari Mahta was working under him and later became the *fauzadar* of Darbhanga. All the native Rajput Chiefs of Tirhut sided with Narendra Siṁha. It has been rightly asserted that during this period under review all the Hindu Chiefs secretly wished for a change and were in search of opportunities for the owing off the shackles of Muslim doing harm,[62] and it is, therefore, natural that when Narendra Siṁha raised the banner of revolt, he was supported by the local Zemindars.

It is reasonable to believe that the account of Lal Kavi about the battle of Kandarpīghāta is to a great extent correct. There is nothing to doubt about the identification of personalities involved and the cause of the contest. The battle took place in the month of Aswin (Sept.-October), just after the Durgā Pūjā, when Zainuddin was staying at Bhanwara in 1745-46. It was during his stay here that he received a letter from Allivardi to proceed to Murshidabad through the tracts lying to the north of the Ganges. Why did the Deputy Governor condescend to Bhanwara without any reason? The seriousness of the situation might have called his physical presence in the region. The court historian possibly ignored this important episode because of the defeat of the Nawab's army at the hands of Narendra Simha. All traditional sources are unanimous on the point that Narendra Simha was victorious. The *AT* (p. 34) says that Allivardi ultimately renewed the grant and the autonomous status of Mithilā was preserved.[63] The cordial relationship was restored.

Narendra Siṁha is said to have curbed the power of the terai kings of Nepal. In order to commemorate the name of his father, he founded a city on the Kausiki river, named Raghavpur (modern Raghopur in the district of Saharsa). He gave Jai Kishun a grant of the villages of Charaut and Madhwapur for the foundation of a *Matha.*[64] He had one of his wives from Mahisi (Saharsa) and at the request of this queen, he is said to laid the foundation of the present temple of Mahisi. He also granted the villages of Bewan and Bishunpatti in Pargana Malhnigopala (Saharsa) to the mother of Babu Pratap Singh for maintenance in 1759.

61. Ibid.
62, Hill-Bengal-III, 328
63. BMI-226.
64. Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer (1958), P. 222.

Like the earlier rulers of Darbhanga, he maintained the high position of scholarship and culture and made liberal grants for these purpose. The Colophons of *MSS*, written or compiled during his reign, speak volume about his achievements. He died in 1770 and till 1778 his wife retained the authority.

In 1778, Rājā Pratāpa Siṁha became king.[65] He was responsible for the transfer of capital from Bhanwara to Jhanjharpur and later on to Darbhanga. He is called "*Mithileśa*" in local tradition. After the acquisition of Dewani in 1765, the EIC had begun to take active part in these areas. We learn from the contemporary records that the crime position in Purnea and Tirhut was deteriorating. In a letter, dated 27th July, 1771, the superintendent of Sircar Tirhut wrote to the Chief of the Council at Patna—"There are internal robbers who frequent this Sircar and these alongwith the thieves who are residents of this Sircar have grown too formidable and they are supported by Rājā Pratāpa Siṁha".[66] In this letter, the Superintendent sought permission to order the confinement of the Rājā. In reply, the Chief entirely approved of his endeavours to clear Tirhut of the gangs and directed him to make full enquiry if the charges against the Rājā were well founded, and in case it appeared that the Rājā really encouraged them and they were his men, then he should be kept at Patna. Pratāpa Siṁha granted a rent-free Brahmottar lands to one Brahmadatta Jhā in villages Surson and Iforepahi (in Pargana Bhour) and the same was confirmed by Emperor Shah Alam II.[67] Like his predecessors, he also made a *bishnprit* grant to Bhawanath Sharma for teaching and supporting students. The interest of the EIC in Tirhut grew more and more after 1772, when a Board of Revenue was established in Calcutta and the revenue of Tirhut was settled for five years on the farming system. In 1774, Tirhut was subordinated to the Provincial Council at Patna. The grant of *Sudui* was confirmed by Kasim Ali Khan. In 1777, the Board directed the collection of the detailed information for the purposes of revenue settlement and in 1782, Francis Grand was appointed the first Collector of Tirhut. Pratāpa Siṁha was followed by Mādhava (Madho Siṁha) Siṁha in 1785 and he permanently transferred his capital to Darbhanga.

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65. Regarding the dates of the rulers of the Khandavalā dynasty, there is a difference of opinion. For the present, I have accepted the dates given in ST.

66. BPP – LXXIII (No. 137) (July-December, 1954), P. 127.

67. J. S, Jha-op. cit. 47; Also cf. J. S. Jha- The Darbhanga Raj Records Office with particular reference to the Educational Records" in the PIHRC. XXXIV, Part II, pp. 33-41.

The reign of Mādhava Siṁha constitutes an epoch in the history of the Khaṇḍavalā dynasty of Mithilā. At the time of his accession, Francis Grand was the Collector of Tirhut with his head-quarters at Darbhanga and the Rājā, therefore, thought it wise to shift his head-quarters to Darbhanga on a permanent basis. Attempts were afoot to reorganise the revenue administration and the East India Company was busy—collecting data in this regard. Shah Alam II confirmed the hereditary grant of Sarkar Tirhut and Pargana Dharmpur on Mādhava Siṁha and this grant and other grants are also mentioned in the *ST*. When Cornwallis introduced his permanent settlement, Mādhava Siṁha was not in a mood to accept the settlement, specially the terms proposed by the Collector and the Board, on the ground that no regard was being paid to his *malikānā* and *dasturānt*. Mādhava Siṁha rightly claimed the lordship of the whole of Tirhut on the basis of ancient hereditary right. For the redress of his grivances, he made a petition to Shah Alam II for the confirmation of his hereditary Zemindari and the Emperor, in his forty second year, issued the *Firman* confirming the Zemindari on April 10, 1800 A.D. Before the grant was received, Mādhava Siṁha was compelled by the British masters to accept partly the terms of the permanent settlement and on the 7th April, 1800, the EIC issued an *amal-dastak* settling certain villages permanently upon the Rājā. All his claims were not accepted by the Company and parts of his estates were settled with others in Bihar and that settlement formed the basis of Zemindari (also called Raj Darbhanga)'till' its abolition in 1947.[68] Mādhava Siṁha played a very important part in the contemporary politics and that is evident from the contemporary records.[69] The robbers were infesting the area and later on the *fakirs* and the *Sannyāsis* also joined against the atrocities of the EIC. The Purnea Collectorate Records inform us that the Chief of Purnea had to send military force under Captain William to check the *fakirs*. These *Fakirs* and *Sannyāsis* were protected and encouraged by the Rājā of Morang. Khurram Shah, the Chief of one of the Fakirs, was released by the Rājā of Nepal and was encamping at Mutteani (Matihani), a village belonging to Morang on the boundary of Tirhut. He was threatening Rājā Mādhava Siṁha to pay a visit unless he was paid a good amount. This fact is confirmed by a letter of 9th Jan. 1795 to the Collector of Tirhut informing him that Khurram had gathered on the

68. Fifth Report on East India Affairs-Vol. II, By Firminger (Calcutta-1917); Kerr-Darbhanga Settlement Report (Calcutta 1904), P. 19; Muzaffarpur Settlement Report: Ghose-Indian Chiefs, Rājās etc, (1881) II.

69. Cf. P. C. Roy Choudhary-Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records.

borders of Tirhut with a large body of armed body of men with hostile intentions[70]. In 1792, the *nankar* lands, the *dasturānt* and *malikānā* were resumed by the Government.

An account of the contemporary Tirhut is preserved in the Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records.[71] The whole area of Tirhut from Hajipur to Purnea was passing through the unprecedented famine caused due to (i) the injudicious interference of the Government; (ii) to the absence of the means of inter-communication and (iii) to the lack of imagination and foresight. Hunter observed[72] "*Our histories are the narratives of the English conquest.........not the histories of the Indian people. We hardly know anything of the labouring masses.........or of the customs and usages on which we promised to build up our system of rural law*". The local rulers in the area, no doubt, helped the suffering humanity but that help was just like a drop in the ocean. Taking advantage of the unstable situation, the Zemindars used to extort money from different sources.[73] In 1782, it was ordained that no Zemindars and other land holders paying revenue to Government were permitted to alienate lands without the express authority of the Government.[74] In 1787, R. Bathurst was directed to take charge of Tirhut over and above the Parganas north of the Ganges. It appears from the correspondances that the Rājā of Tirhut had given on rent some lands to Mr. Smith and the Collector of Tirhut was asked to communicate to Mr. Smith that he could not claim exemption *(Māfi)* upon the verbal promise of the Rājā. Mr. Grand, the Collector of Tirhut, had also observed in his account a considerable sum as due to Mr. Smith to the Rājā of Tirhut. In such cases, the Rājā was entitled to expect all the due assistance from the Government, but suspension of the realisation of the Government revenue for this account could not be accepted. Bathurst notified to the Zemindars that in case of non-payment of revenue within 15 days from the date of demand, their lands would be attached. The Collector was further directed to attach all the property of Rājā Mādhava Simha arising from his *dastoorat.*[75] Mādhava Simha had to contend against the Britishers for a pretty long time in getting his rights recognised and he had

70. Cf. P. C. Roy Choudhary-Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records. BPP. LXXIII (No. 137), pp. 128-131
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid-pp. 45-46.
73. Ibid-52-53, Nos. 37 and 40
74. Ibid. No. 41.
75. Ibid, P. 76, No. 96.

to fight a very long case. Darbhanga was at that time the capital of Sarkar Tirhut. The Britishers were not pleased with Mādhava Siṁha.

The Collector of Tirhut in 1788 was in favour of the resumption of rent-free lands but Rājā Mādhava Siṁha raised various objections against resumption. In one of his petition he mentioned that in 1186 *(fasli)* he obtained the lease of Sarkar Tirhut from the Governor General in Council at a *Mokarrijama.* In 1188, Maharaj Kalyan Siṁha offered an increase upon the *mokarrari* lease of Mādhava Siṁha. In 1189, Mādhava Siṁha obtained the favour of Sarkar Tirhut upon the same term as Maharaj Kalyan Simha. In 1195, due to the mismanagement and oppression of his naib, Madan Ṭhākura, Mādhava Siṁha was unable to fulfil the engagement to the E. I. Company as was stipulated in the *kabuliyats.* As such, Mr. Bathurst, the Collector, sent for him as a prisioner for having fallen in balance at the end of the year. In order to liquidate company's money, he had to borrow money and sell a part of his property.[76] The Collector of Tirhut in 1789 questioned the authority of the Khaṇḍavalās. Bathurst wrote about Mādhava Siṁha—"He was a man in every way incapable of managing so extensive a farm, or in fact any farm whatever"—His Zemindari was settled with Faizuddin and Barkatulla Khan. Mādhava Siṁha began to conspire with others against this arrangement but he ultimately got back his due in 1793. The Zemindari was later on restored to him. In 1789, the Collector of Tirhut opposed the ideas about the fixed settlement of land (the zemindari system) and in this connection, he observed, "*if unhappily the attempt should be finally and unconditionally insisted upon, it will shortly follow that we shall have now battle to fight, and new conquest to achieve.*"[77] In one of the petitions,[78] dated 5th October, 1789, from the merchants of Darbhanga, it appears that Mādhava Siṁha used to realise Rs. 10/- on each boat and two annas on each bullock over and above which they were forced to pay besides marriage and other duties, though they were not his ryots. They, therefore, solicited the attention of the Board for justice. In 1793 a proposal was made for the reorganisation of the district of Tirhut, keeping in view the compactness of the area. The proposal was that *Tirhut should be bounded on the north by Nepal, on the south by the Ganges, by the Kosi in the east and Gandak on the west*[79] *with Darbhanga as the capital.* Mādhava Siṁha played a very

76. Ibid, P. 86, No. 119; 87. No. 122;
77. Ibid, PP. 88-89 ,No. 124.
78. Ibid, P. 95, No. 148.
79. Ibid - 128 No. 253, also No. 263.

prominent role in the contemporary politics of Darbhanga and Nepal.[80] In March 1795, the *dasturānt* claim of Rājā Mādhava Simha was well founded.[81] A letter of May, 1799, indicates that he had his authority in the district of Purnea.[82] He is called the proprietor of Pargana Dharm-pur. At one stage it was thought that alternative settlement of the estate of Mādhava Simha be made in case he refused to accede to the terms and condition of the Government.[83] A letter from the Board of Revenue (13th January, 1801) mentions that the Parvānās, issued by the late acting Collector, regarding the adjustment of account of Tikādār in the Zemindari of Rājā Mādhava Simha, were entirely unauthorised and consequently they could not serve as grounds for the Rājā's claim to a suspension or remission of revenue.[84] Another letter of Feb. 8, 1803, the Collector of Tirhut deals with the issue of the realisation[85] of rent from the *Maliks* and reflects upon their conduct in the matter. He complains ".........the Maliks are not even ready to pay that much of amount which they had committed of their own accord and all the regulations were very little cared by them......Big Zemindars did all sorts of improprieties and rallied round themselves small zemindars......". It appears from a letter of 1804 that Pargannas Chai and Pharkiya were separated from Tirhut and added to Bhagalpur.[86]

It was during the time of Mādhava Simha that the Zemindary was confirmed. From the nature of the correspondences now available it is clear that he asserted his overlordship over the whole of Sircar Tirhut. After his infructuous efforts for more than twelve years for recognition of his authority over the whole of Sircar Tirhut, he accepted the Permanent Settlement. A very important document of his reign (Śaka 1716 = 1794 A. D.) has been discovered and published. That is the judgement of a Maithila Hindu Court in Sanskrit deciding the possession of two rival Brāhmaṇa family over a slave girl and is of unique importance. On the basis of this judgement, it is believed that Mādhava Simha was possessed of absolute power in Tirhut. He died in 1807. He was succeeded by Rājā Chatra Simha, who is said to have rendered valuable services to the Government at the time of Nepal War in 1814-15 A. D. Lord Hastings

80. Ibid, P. 130, No. 266.
81. Ibid, P. 140, No. 315.
82. Ibid, P. 156 F. No. 376, 379, 399, 410.
83. Ibid, P. 180, No. 407, 409, 428, 433.
84. Ibid, P. 193, No. 449.
85. Ibid, P. 207, No. 494.
86. Ibid, P. 2114, No. 523

conferred on him the title of Mahārāja. There was some family trouble during the reign but was, ultimately, amicably settled. He ruled from 1807 to 1839 A. D. Mr. W. Jane, Collector of Tirhut, had to deal with him regarding the *Dastoorānt* and *Malikānā*.[87] He was now called the Rājā of Darbhanga. It was during his reign that the boundary between Nepal and Tirhut was demarcated. In 1817, some Terai territory of Tirhut were transferred to Nepal. The Rājā of Tirhut, Chatra Simha, was granted remuneration for supplying *Barkandaza* to company's Officer during the Nepal war.[88] He was followed by his son, Rudra Simha. Again there was some family dispute. The Privy Council decreed that the property was impartiable and since then the inheritance is regulated by the Law of Primogeniture. Rudra Simha died in 1850 and was succeeded by Maheshwara Simha who held the estate till 1860 when it was taken over by the Government as of Court of Wards. In 1880, Mahārāja Lakshmiśwara Simha occupied the throne and was succeeded in 1898 by Mahārāja Rameśwara Simha, who was decorated with the title of Mahārājadhirāja in 1920. He died in 1929 and was succeeded by Mahārāja Kāmeśwara Simha who ruled till September 30, 1962. After his death, a trust has been created.

The records of East India Company, Collectorate records of Bhagalpur, Purnea, Monghyr, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and recently discovered records throw a flood of light on the status of Khaṇḍavalās of Mithilā. They were honoured both by the Moghuls and the Britishers. The case-documents also throw sufficient light on the history of the Darbhanga Raj. The grants issued by the Khaṇḍavalās, bear the insignia of fish, which according to *Siyar-ul-Mutukherin*, was introduced by the Moghuls in India, as the highest military decoration. The insignia might have been granted by the Moghuls to Gopāla Ṭhākura for his signal service to the Mughal army. It was the emblem of high nobility or soverignty. The Darbhanga Raj had a huge administrative machinery and when the Indian National Congress was established in 1885, Mahārāja Lakṣmīśwara Simha made liberal contributions. Following the footsteps, of the earlier rulers of Mithilā, the Khaṇḍavalās also patronised learning and education.[89]

The Raj Archives is yet a sealed book for many and as and when the records are thrown open, it would be possible to rewrite a comprehen-

87. Ibid – P. 331, Nos. 784, 786.

88. Ibid, P. 313, No. 731.

89. Cf, J.S.Jha – "The Darbhanga Raj Records Office with a particular reference to the education records' – in the PIHRC XXXIV-Pt. II, pp. 33-41.

sive history of the dynasty. The documents, discovered recently, are very interesting and important as they throw sidelights on the contemporary system of land and revenue administration and in the grant of Aurangzeb, the duties of Qanungoes and Choudharies are explicitly specified. The difficulty is that there is no mention of the estate in *Aini-Akbari* or any other contemporary records.

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